



City of Rockville
MEMORANDUM

May 14, 2010

TO: Jim Wasilak, Chief of Planning

FROM: Rebecca Torma, Transportation Planner II *RT*

VIA: Emad Elshafei, Chief of Traffic and Transportation *EE*
Mark Wessel, Civil Engineer III *MW*

SUBJECT: Rockville Heights Historic District Shared Use Path, HDC2010-00496
Victory Court, 209 Monroe Street

The Department of Public Works (DPW) recommends the Historic District Commission approve a small encroachment along Fleet Street into lots 6 and 7 of the Rockville Heights Historic District for the installation of an eight-foot sidewalk/shared use path.

During the development review process, DPW has the responsibility to ensure that projects comply with all codes and standards applicable within City right of ways. Requirements for right of way improvements are based on the City Code, the Bikeway Master Plan (BMP), and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

City Code Chapter 21 titled, "Streets and Public Improvements", dictates the standards for sidewalk width in the public right of way by road designation. Fleet Street is classified as a Business District road and under Subsection 21-60(3)e., it states "sidewalks shall be built from the property line to the back of the curb". The property line along the frontage of the historic homes varies from four to twelve feet behind the curb. Currently, a six-foot sidewalk exists on the back of curb. DPW requires replacement of this sidewalk and seeks an additional two-foot encroachment to install an eight-foot sidewalk/shared use path. The eight-foot sidewalk is more in conformance with City Code and will minimize impacts to the historic lots.

The BMP provides recommendations and standards for installing bicycle facilities, including shared use paths. A shared use path is intended to accommodate various non-motorized users and supplement a system of on-road bicycle facilities by providing a safer condition for roads with heavier volumes and faster traffic. The BMP recommends a ten-foot wide shared use path with a grass strip between the road and the path. When right-of-way space is limited, the BMP allows up to a two-foot reduction in path width. It further states in situations where the right-of-way is not adequate, installing the full path width adjacent to the curb without the grass strip is preferred over reducing the path width to accommodate a grass strip. The BMP recommends a shared use path along Fleet Street between Maryland Avenue and Wootton Parkway. The shared use path from Wootton Parkway past Richard Montgomery High School has been completed. Construction of the path in front of the historic homes will nearly complete the entire connection to Wootton Parkway. Staff is requesting an encroachment into the historic district to install of an eight-foot path, which will comply with the minimum standards recommended by the BMP.

ADA sets standards for sidewalk widths and grades. The existing sidewalk in front of all the Fleet Street historic homes is not in compliance with ADA standards since it is too steep and narrow for disabled individuals to safely navigate. The increased sidewalk width and reconstruction of the driveway aprons required with this project will meet the ADA standards.

DPW has reviewed an alternative path configuration that was discussed at the HDC's March 18, 2010 meeting, which consisted of a six-foot wide path with a two-foot grass strip between the curb and road. However, this path configuration is not consistent with the BMP or in compliance with the City Code. The eight-foot wide path behind the curb minimizes the impacts to the historic district boundary while still being Code compliant and acceptable under the BMP.

Therefore, in order to comply with City Code, BMP recommendations and ADA standards, DPW, in conjunction with approval from the HDC, will require the applicant, Victory Court Housing, to replace the existing sidewalk along Fleet Street with an eight-foot wide sidewalk/shared use path. A public improvement easement will be established in order to construct the sidewalk on the historic lots.